



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement of Response to the Georgian Intervention on Events in Abkhazia

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 23, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States supports a cooperative and fully transparent international approach, in partnership with Georgia, to achieve a full resolution of the Abkhaz conflict that respects Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We support the efforts of the United Nations to bring about such a resolution to the conflict on the basis of the paper on "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competencies Between Tbilisi and Sukhumi", which I believe is often known as the "Boden Paper" for short. Prepared by a distinguished Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, this paper has received the full support of the United Nations Security Council.

We fully understand the concern of the Georgian government over unilateral actions by the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation, we believe, should abstain from activities that appear to enhance the separate status of Abkhazia and render the negotiating process more difficult.

The United States was pleased to see signs late last year, following the meeting between Presidents Shevardnadze and Putin in Chisinau, of an improvement in relations between Russia and Georgia. We hope that both sides will take steps to renew this forward momentum in their bilateral relations.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.